

THE DUTIES
OF
EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED,
CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO
PRINCIPALS
AND THEIR
CLERKS OR APPRENTICES.

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THE DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS AND THE EMPLOYED.

INTRODUCTION.

Importance of Mutual Confidence in the relation of Employers and their Clerks or Apprentices.—Defective Views of the Duties pertaining to this Relation.

THE well-being of every community depends essentially on a spirit of mutual confidence, and of friendship, sincerely cherished by the different classes of persons who compose it. In saying this, we have only stated a general law which shines by its own light. And when we consider that the men who now occupy the various posts of business within the realm of commerce or mechanic art, and those youth whom they are training up to take their places, or to make new ones for themselves, constitute the very life and strength of the commonwealth, we can not but see how desirable, and how necessary it is, that the relation between them should be one of amity and kindness; that while, on the one hand, the clerk and the apprentice should be benefited by the wisdom and skill of the employer, that, on the other hand, he should find in them those qualities of aptness, diligence, and fidelity, which will render their services valuable to him. It is only a widespread relationship of this sort that can lay a solid basis for social order and permanent prosperity. If, on the part of the employer, there be indulged a prevailing spirit of rapacity, selfishness, or indifference,

and on the part of his young men an utter disregard of his interests, or a vengeful sentiment of retaliation, the scenes of business become a school for the education of the worst and meanest passions; a miserable place of preparation for the duties of the present life, and still less adapted to prepare one for the allotments of "the life to come." Nevertheless, whosoever will take manly views of both the present and the future, resolving at the outset to render this relation friendly, parental, confidential, giving scope to generous feelings and to Christian aims, will find, in the peculiar duties which pertain to it, deep springs of mental satisfaction and delight.

But the question arises, what are these duties? what is their extent? There are many who have never considered them at all; many who deny their obligation. "I know of no peculiar duties that I owe to a clerk or apprentice," once said an employer who was all engrossed with the pursuits of business; "they come to me in order to earn a livelihood, and as long as they behave well, I treat them civilly, as I would all others with whom I have anything to do." But could he thus easily discard all the moral obligations arising from his particular connexion with them? Would his Maker and Judge ratify such a disclaimer as that? Does not every new relationship into which we enter give rise to some new, specific duty, and bring upon us a corresponding responsibility? In one of the most instructive parables that was ever uttered, our Savior tells us of two men, professedly religious, who, travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, saw by the wayside a poor sufferer, who had been attacked and robbed; as there he lay in his blood, his wounds appealed "with their dumb mouths" to the heart of humanity: but they looked coolly on the scene, disclaimed all responsibility, and passed on their journey. They had harmed no one, and could gravely say that

they did not feel bound to repair the injuries which others had committed. But did Heaven hold them guiltless? The very fact that they were brought nigh a fellow-man whose necessities made him dependent on them for special aids which they had the power to confer, rendered him in a legal sense their *neighbor*, because it brought him within the scope of that command of God which bids us "love our neighbor as ourselves," or, in other words, to make his happiness our own. The picture which our Lord has drawn to illustrate the spirit of that precept, presents a touching case of bodily suffering; yet, are there not *moral* needs, wants of the mind and heart, as urgent as any that are felt by flesh and sense? Are there not wounds of the spirit to be healed? Are there not those around you whose dependent and exposed condition pleads for them that you would pour in upon their souls "the oil and wine" of kindness, counsel, and a healthful moral influence? If it be a binding duty on us to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity," have not those youth, who are in daily association with their seniors for the purpose of learning to manage the business of life, high claims on their employers for the exercise of sympathy, care, and friendly vigilance, simply because there is no class of human beings, beyond the precincts of one's own family, who furnish so many opportunities of conferring needed benefits?

Inquiries like these, when fairly set in the light of Christian principles, admit only of an affirmative answer. Let us proceed, then, to consider the moral duties which belong to the relation of the employer and the employed, and, **FIRST**, the duties which devolve on the employer.

PART I.

- I. The Duty of Employers to allow to their Clerks or Apprentices every practicable means of acquiring an adequate Knowledge of their Calling.—Example of the French Government.—Moral Bearing of this Consideration. II. Duty of Employers to train up those under their care to *honorable Habits of Business*.—Dignity and Degradation of Commerce. III. Duty of Employers to furnish to the Young under their care those *Moral Aids* which may strengthen them to cope with surrounding Temptations.—Influence of trivial Events on their Destiny.—Their need of (1) a Sabbath.—Teachings of Nature, Revelation, and Experience, on this Subject.—(2) Personal Influence exerted by means of Friendly Interchange.—(3) Incentives to occupy Hours of Leisure usefully.—(4) Religious Culture.

I. PRIMARILY, it becomes all those who have youth under their care for purposes of business, to allow them every practicable advantage which they may need, in order to acquire an *adequate knowledge of their calling*. As a public teacher of youth, when his scholars are about to pass an examination in the school-room or the counting-room, feels a deep concern that they should be well qualified in the branches which have engaged their attention, so every man of business should cherish the desire that those young men who go forth from his establishment should have a competent knowledge of their profession. Indeed, the word "apprentice" originally meant a scholar, being derived from the French verb *apprendre*—to learn; and although the word *university* is now confined to an institution of science and literature, in old times it was the name given to an incorporated body of business-men; so that they used to speak of "the university of smiths," "the university of clothiers," and would also apply the word to other combinations.

And certainly, he who considers the welfare of his country, will see it to be as important that the young men who graduate from farms, shops, and counting-rooms, should be qualified for their pursuits, as that those who graduate at a college should know as much as their diplomas certify. If all the institutions of learning in the land should turn out poor scholars, no one, in particular, might take any blame to himself; yet, what an amount of calamity and dishonor would this course bring upon the nation! How difficult would it become to find men qualified for the bench and the bar, the medical chair, the sick-room, or the pulpit! Nor less would our national character suffer, if "the universities of trades" should send forth young men deficient in elementary knowledge. So important was this matter deemed in France, so long ago as the last century, that there proper officers were appointed to examine a young man ere he was allowed to set up in business as an educated apprentice; and if he were engaged in any department of the arts, he was required to bring before them a fair specimen of his work. If he succeeded, he was called an aspirant, or a candidate for mastership. This arrangement had a powerful influence in elevating professional character in all branches of business, and thus, in promoting the national interests. Although, in this country, the government could not carry such a plan as this into effect, yet the great end which it aimed at is as important here as elsewhere; the attainment of it, however, must be left to that public opinion which gives law to custom. Evidently, therefore, a patriotic spirit—a regard to the common welfare, as well as a sense of duty to God, and of justice to the inexperienced youth—should urge every head of an establishment to see to it that all who are under his care attain that knowledge of their duties which will qualify them to "teach others

also," to sustain well their position as members of society, and to honor that calling to which they devote their lives.

Obvious facts give moral force to these considerations. Too often have we seen that the young man who enters upon the arena of business without an efficient preparation, has been, on that account, pressed with responsibilities which he could not bear—surrounded with difficulties with which he had not power to cope; and then, when disaster had long tracked his steps, and utter failure had disheartened him, he has sought relief from trouble in the winecup—has formed habits of dissipation whose chains he could not break, and has sunk down, helpless and hopeless, "a dead weight" upon the community.

II. But besides imparting to young men that kind of education which consists in knowledge and skill, it becomes those who are masters in business, by both precept and example, *to train up all who are under their care to honorable habits of business.*

I use the term "honorable" in a sense that befits the lips of a Christian, as opposed to everything dishonest, mean, and deceitful. It is said that "there is honor among thieves;" and he who admits no higher standard of honor than the prevailing social law, may sometimes place the stamp of honor on infamy itself. But in a truly civilized and Christian community, no one can habitually violate the law of equity, can direct his dependants to tell lies for a profit, or pursue a course of dealing which requires him to creep like a serpent, instead of moving erect like a man, without destroying his self-respect, making an enemy of his own conscience, nor without feeling some disgust for a pursuit whose gains must be gotten by so enormous a sacrifice. Dishonesty

is dishonor; and far better would it be that commerce should languish, or be managed on the narrow scale of the patriarchal ages, than that the moral sense, the honor, the integrity of the nation, should be laid as a whole burnt-offering on its shrine.

But this is not necessary. Commerce is a want of society, and may be conducted on honorable principles. Were it otherwise, were it true, as some have thought, that "every trade must have its tricks," and that the moral law of veracity, though excellent in theory, can not be applied in practice, what would this prove, but that all commercial business is contrary to nature, and a conspiracy against the government of God? Let him who speaks in this way establish his proposition, and what has he done, but shown that all the arrangements of mercantile life are at war with public virtue, with the ingenuous character of youth, with our national welfare, as well as the laws of Heaven, and that it is the duty of every friend of religion and humanity, of the mother who breathes her gentle teachings in the nursery to the boy whose moral health she values more than life, and of the minister in the sanctuary who commends to the divine keeping the interests of his country, to pray that the Almighty would blast the whole system by the thunders of his power, rather than to ask that he would foster our commerce by his providential care? What has he done, but given reason to expect the working out of such a ruin under the government of a Being who "hateth iniquity," who "taketh up the isles as a very little thing," to whom "the nations are but as the small dust of the balance," and who will not much regard the number of our ships which whiten every sea, or the strength of our lofty storehouses which beautify our cities, or the grandeur of our merchants' palaces, adorned with unjust gains, but will lay them all under the ban of his wrath when "the

day of visitation" cometh, in the exercise of the same high sovereignty as was expressed in the doom pronounced against Jerusalem—"Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's."

We affirm again our belief that falsehood is not necessary in the business of life; and, being friends of commerce, would assert its moral dignity as the great agent in the civilization of the world and the progress of society. One great reason why a departure from integrity has seemed, in the view of many, to be so necessary and so politic, and why the avowal of it has become so much more popular in our time than it was formerly, is, that there has been more deeply cherished a ruling passion for the quick acquisition of fortune, and for a certain extravagant style of life. It is true, human nature has not changed; but the boundless realm of speculation, which was opened in this country some few years ago, has nourished this passion to strange excess. And when passion rules, the mind is blind; for no more than the bat can it see things truly by daylight. While under its spell, moral considerations are not treated as realities, and the soul becomes reckless of the means by which the end is gained. There is a dimness of moral perception; the sensibility to evil is blunted. Even now, we are not affected by deviations from honorable dealing as our fathers would have been; crimes which would have shocked them profoundly, scarcely ruffle the surface of our self-complacency. If a man only get a fortune, no matter how—too often his success is his defence; its glitter hides the odiousness of the means. He who steals a dollar is charged with larceny, and is called a criminal; he who, by an ingenious process, abstracts thousands from an insurance company or a mercantile firm, is called by the softer name of "a defaulter," and commands respect in some sort, according to the boldness of his operation.

The love of party triumph invented the saying, "All's fair in politics;" and if the phrase, "All's fair in trade," is not uttered as a popular maxim, a large class of facts might be cited to show that by many it has been practically adopted. Deception in small things is connived at, until, at last, utter recklessness becomes the disease of a community. To what ultimate results these things have tended, and would have reached had they been left unarrested by the hand of Providence, we can easily guess, when we remember that several leading statesmen have boldly advocated the policy of repudiating debts which it is not convenient to pay, have seen themselves sustained by large parties in the states where they live, and have thus turned the eyes of foreign nations away from the misfortunes of our land, to behold with astonishment the vast extent to which there has obtained a dereliction from principle.

One of the imperative duties, therefore, which men of business owe to the youth around them, is, to cherish in their breasts a manly sentiment in favor of honorable dealing. Let them be "rooted and grounded" in the truth, that it is no disgrace to become the victims of poverty, to be conquered by misfortunes which could not be foreseen, but that for them, though encouraged by the example of others, to strike out bold schemes of business, and to calculate on bringing matters to a crisis, so as to pay "thirty-three cents on a dollar," is to act on a principle which not only involves sin and shame, but, in its issues, brings the judgments of God on the individual, and temporal ruin on the community. Let their integrity be held sacred. Let fair dealing be made a point of honor, and let them be taught that, if men understand their profession as merchants, they can manage the business of exchange between the producer and the consumer, with advantage to all, without the help of fraud and chicanery.

III. It is the duty of the employer to furnish to the youth under his care those *moral aids* which will enable them to cope with the peculiar temptations that beset them. Every young man, especially in a great city, is called to a stern moral conflict with the leagued hosts of evil—a battle which is in constant progress, and in which, now and then, there comes a critical moment whereon his destiny is suspended. A slight incident will sometimes become the turning-point of a history. In The London Illustrated Magazine is a story entitled “Life behind the Counter,” which was intended to show, by a vivid picture, how entirely the complexion of a young man’s character was determined by a conversation which led him to forego a concert and a supper with a company who were inclined to dissipation, in order to enjoy a walk and the society of an excellent friend. This representation is true to nature; for often, with some such trivial event, comes that great question of life and death, which, in some way or other, comes to every man—that question which a Greek mythologist would express by the startling phrase, “Will you join the dragons or the gods?” Not a day passes without verifying this statement; for where is the young man who is not obliged to consider invitations, which, if accepted, will give a new turn to his thoughts, a new character to his company, and affect the whole atmosphere of moral influence which he will afterward inhale?

Now, in order that he may safely meet these exigencies, he needs, as the first and greatest aid which an employer can do somewhat to bestow, a well-spent SABBATH. “The sabbath was made for man” by Him who made man, who understood his constitution and his wants. It is a heritage for all—a birthright which God has given to every one. He has shown his regard to our *physical* wants in the varied gifts of nature so freely

lavished on us; and the addition of the sabbath to all these, attests his paternal care for the culture of that immortal spirit which is destined to rise from the ruins of the body to a full development of its powers, in a course of eternal progression. He has engraven the sabbath-law, not only on the stone tables of the decalogue, but on the very frame-work of the human race; for, just as, by observing the alternation of day and night, we see that the principle of *rest*, as well as of *action*, is a part of the system of the universe, so, by noticing the different effects of the observance or violation of the sabbath on the health, strength, and life, of active men (and indeed of all working animals), we see that the seventh-day rest, as well as the night rest, is a part of this same system. Man, borne along by the vigor of his mind, does not show the physical effect of this constant diurnal exertion so soon as the laboring brute, but breaks down at last more suddenly: as is observed particularly by Dr. Combe, in his book on health, where he names several public men, who, acting under the influence of "ambition, or natural eagerness of mind, have been suddenly arrested in their career by the inordinate action of the brain, induced by incessant toil." Yet, although the voice of nature unites with the voice of revelation, in the utterance of the command, "Remember the sabbath-day, to hallow it," the chief benefit of the sabbath is not physical, but moral and religious. It is designed as a counterpoise to those mighty influences of every-day life which tend to make the soul the slave of sense and passion—those influences of which, in their relation to youth, the poet Burns has sung so plaintively:—

"Alternate follies take the sway,
 Licentious passions burn:
 This, tenfold force gives Nature's law,
 That man was made to mourn."

In order to counteract this tendency of the soul to become the victim of low sensuality, to instruct and quicken the conscience, to cultivate a taste for sober truth, to emancipate and exalt the spiritual nature, a sabbath is needed by mankind; and the institution accomplishes these ends by its involving the acknowledgment of our relation to the divine Lawgiver, by strengthening a sense of accountability to him, calling off the mind from the visible to the invisible, from the temporal to the eternal, and by turning the attention to those momentous revelations which he has addressed to us in his holy words. It is a means of improvement which can not be neglected with impunity. As every violated law of nature will avenge itself, so will sabbath-breaking be followed by special penalties; and thousands of instances prove that the very FIRST STEP in that course of youthful determination which ends in the wreck of character and happiness, has been the desecration of the sabbath.

Undoubtedly, a calm survey of things in our great cities will convince any one that there is very little danger of exaggerating the importance of the sabbath in its relation to young men; for many of those who have deeply fallen, in retracing their history have fixed on certain eras of its course, have been led to confess that some riding or sailing party, some refectory, or bar-room, or idle company associated with sabbath-dissipation, marks the sharp turning-point of life's downward path, and that the retrospect forces them to say with poor Gibbs, who suffered death for crime, "but for the violation of the sabbath I might have been a good and happy man."

And in view of such a class of facts, may we not fairly appeal to employers with the question, whether it is not probable that some of the young men within the sphere of their influence, will reap from their sabbath-violations

such wretched harvests as these persons bewailed too late? Any one who has had occasion to pass a sabbath in the vicinity of a large city like New York or Boston, has probably been struck with scenes which must give to this inquiry a painful significance. At Hoboken, or at Chelsea, for instance, during some seasons of the year, what throngs of youth may be seen riding to places of low resort to spend the day in drinking, gaming, and revelry; and then again, returning to the city under the maddening excitement of their sports and cups, pouring forth profanity in their unseemly conversations and their songs, while their looks, tones, and manners, show that they glory in their recklessness! Some of them, doubtless, are the sons of rich men, without employment; but most of them are clerks or apprentices, who can ill afford the mere waste of money thus incurred, and who are encircling themselves with the most potent temptations to leap over the bounds of honesty, and to take by stealth the means of their demoralizing pleasures. And withal, there is great reason to fear that many of them have passed through the initiating process, and have become hardened in the worst of habits without having felt the power of *one earnest effort on the part of their employers* to learn what was actually going on in the shaping of their destinies, or to win them over to a right moral and religious observance of the sabbath. And surely, seeing that in all these cases the perverted blessing becomes a curse, that the medicine misused is turned into a poison, how carefully should an employer guard against trespassing on a young man's sabbath, or tempting any one under his influence to part with it for love or for money.

2. Another moral aid, which an employer may confer on a young man, is the *expression of a personal interest in his welfare*, by means of such friendly suggestions as may rouse him to resist temptation, and to cherish high

aims in the pursuits of life. We could easily mention instances where a single word of caution has been attended with a long train of happy consequences. For, sometimes the power of temptation is unsuspected, and the first yielding to it comes of inadvertence. The demon hides his cloven foot while smiles wreath his features, and his lips distil honeyed words. Thus it was in the case of an ingenuous and confiding young salesman, who, at the age of twenty-one, was fatally injured by the company he happened to meet at a restaurant. At first he had resorted thither merely to save his time, and the necessity of a long walk in obtaining his meals. No doubt, his eye had been attracted by the choice birds displayed at the door, and by the tasteful arrangement of the show-window. He had noticed there several times a young man somewhat older than himself, who, one day addressed him by inviting him to enjoy a very fine cigar, from a box imported by a friend. The invitation was accepted. Next followed a proposal to step into an adjoining billiard-room where several were engaged in playing for money. "Let's watch the progress of the game," said his new acquaintance. Having assented to this, in a few moments he became *deeply interested*. Ere long, he was asked to try himself, for a small sum. Notwithstanding his want of practice, his hand, his eye, and aim, and steadiness of nerve, were praised. To his own astonishment he succeeded; for there are places where novices are always allowed to succeed in their first efforts. Then came the soft insinuation, "It is easy for you to win!" This was a *new idea*. Its effect was electrical. A new charm invested the terrible amusement, and his whole mental energy became absorbed in its pursuit. He soon sought deeper and deeper play; dollar after dollar was won, the routine of his business became tedious and distasteful, and in due time his ex-

perienced and skilful tempter, in one fatal hour, swept from him all he possessed, and left him ruined as to his purse, his peace of mind, and a reputation more precious than gold. What a wreck of character and happiness was this; and yet it might have been prevented by the timely hint that would have led him to spend in a better place, that noon-day hour when his unguarded feet first trod the path of the Destroyer.

3d. Another mode, in which an employer may afford moral aid to a young man, is to furnish him *incentives to occupy his hours of leisure usefully*, so that by means of books and associations for the pursuit of knowledge, he may find scope for his love of excitement. For here, we have named a mighty element of temptation—this love of excitement which glows in every human bosom, which, in its intenser actings, has set one adrift from home to roam the ocean lured by the romance of a sailor's life, has impelled another to court hardships in travelling over continents and mingling with foreign nations, has led a third to abandon the retreat of quiet affluence in order to embark his capital in commercial enterprise, which was in an ancient age the soul of war, of chivalry and crusades, and is now the spring of that activity which is turning the western forest into a garden, peopling the golden soil of California with northern youth, and disturbing the haunts of the savage with the whiz of the steam-car or the hum of the factory. Now he who is at the head of an establishment in business, finds scope and play for this love of excitement in managing his affairs, in grappling with difficulties, and in his forecast for the future. In this, however, the clerk or the apprentice does not participate. He goes through the routine of his duties, perhaps becomes jaded with them for want of a genial interest, and then where shall he find the mental excitement which he craves? It is this desire which lays his

soul open to the worst of snares. One fact stated in a public document speaks volumes on this subject. It was in evidence before the Grand Jury in Boston, some time ago, that one of the city police officers on a Saturday night in November, during a walk of less than a mile in extent, passed more than one hundred persons, mostly young men, in a state of partial or entire intoxication! Had these all fallen on a Mexican battle-field, the whole country would have mourned their loss. Had their corpses been brought home for burial, the city would have been clad in funeral drapery, and the sad array would have awakened in every breast those deep emotions which no words, or plaintive music, or outward signs of grief, could adequately express. Yet here were the evidences of a more tremendous ruin, exciting in the hearts of mothers and sisters a keener sorrow which no voice of public sympathy could sooth, and calling forth tears the more bitter because they were shed only in silent solitude.

The commencement of such a career is easy—the return difficult, though not impossible. Oh, for the prevention—the prevention! This is worth more than the cure. And what is this? It is to guard against the *first steps*. It is to surround the young mind with counteracting influences and good associations. It is to have an eye and a heart for the welfare of those under your care when they are away from you, instead of verifying the proverb “out of sight, out of mind.” It is to appeal to them by all the power of personal address and by all the worth of your friendship. It is to arouse in them a desire for self-improvement—a preference for those associations of which mental culture is the object; to quicken within them the love of knowledge, and, by encouraging their hopes of success in business, to stimulate their minds with an excitement like that which imparts to your

own a degree of tone and energy. If in the city, they are at a distance from their early homes, it is to find a place for them as much like a home as possible, and not leave them to form their first acquaintanceships amidst the chance-company of a boarding-house, of which neither knows the character. It is to open to them the path to such society as will meet the demands of their social nature, from its adaptation to both please and profit them; for it has often happened that a young man's acquaintanceship with a single family has become the great *conservative power* of his character, the guiding star in his moral firmament, shedding its benignant rays over that trackless deep on which he has been tossed in succeeding years.

Above all, it is imperatively necessary to favor every influence which shall tend to build up character on the foundation of religious principle. This is a solid and enduring basis. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Without this source of strength, there can be but slight grounds of trust that any human character will withstand the assaults of temptation. Intellectual culture and good social influences may do much to form correct tastes, and sound morals; but there are trials wherein the soul needs stronger defences than these can furnish — trials, in which those maxims, resolutions, and habits, which sufficed in ordinary times, become like battlements of wood before a spreading flame. It is only character, with whose interior elements religious principle is so thoroughly incorporated as to form a part of its very substance, that can come forth from the fires of temptation, like golden ore from the furnace, purified from dross and increased in value.

It is not likely that these pages will fall into the hands of any employer, who would not be glad, if he had the opportunity, to put forth an effort in behalf of any one

of his young men, in order to save a large earthly fortune from threatened ruin. But how much greater will be the joy in the retrospect of life, of having aided effectually to secure to them a treasure which no thief can steal, no calamity destroy, lasting as eternity and more precious than a thousand worlds.

PART II.

Value to be attached to the Period of Clerkship or Apprenticeship.—I. Duty of the Young Man to consider well the true Object of the Relation which he holds to his Employer.—Connexion between the daily Routine of his Employments and fixed Habits, between Habits and Skill, between Skill and Success.—II. Duty of the Young Man to conform himself to the minutest Regulation of his Employer's Establishment.—Influence of this on the Employer, and its Reaction on the Young Man himself. The Exceptions to this Rule, viz., Cases of Moral Wrong.—Duty of the Young Man in Regard to them.—III. Duty of Young Men to use Diligently the Means of Self-Improvement.—(1) Economy of TIME.—Value of Fragments worked into a System.—(2) Right Use of MONEY.—Purchase of Books.—(3) Right Use of the Sabbath.—IV. Duty of the Young Man to exercise Forethought in the Choice of Confidential Friends.—Conclusion.

HAVING called the attention of employers to some of those imperative duties which relate to the young men under their care, we would now address a few considerations to those young men themselves, who have entered into the relations which they hold to their employers in order to become prepared for their chosen pursuits. These have reached the most critical period of life. There is an obvious reason why the season of clerkship or apprenticeship should be so regarded. It belongs to the portion of time devoted to preparation for the duties and cares of a profession, for the toils and the struggles by which each is to work out the problem that involves his own failure or success; and of that preparation it is the *closing period*. If in earlier days much time has been lost, there is yet some chance for redeeming it; if mistakes have been made they may now in a great degree be rectified. We have sometimes seen that those

who have been negligent of study while at school, and even indolent in their habits, have been transformed into all that was active and promising when called to live and move amidst the stirring scenes of business. A sense of necessity sharpened their faculties; then, a consciousness of power stimulated them to exertion, and at last, a real delight in their work became a spring of constant and successful activity. But if this probation be passed without due improvement, if a young man fail to gain a thorough knowledge of his calling, if by yielding to temptation he dissipates his time and money, and thus forms habits adverse to a life of business, it is almost impossible to retrieve the evil; he starts on the career of manhood quite unfitted for the race, moves ever with a faltering or a tardy step, and, in the end, falls short of the goal that shone before him when "distance lent enchantment to the view."

1. The first important duty, with which a young person should charge himself on entering the establishment of his employer, is to fix his attention on *the true object of the relation* which has then begun to exist. Many have become awake to it just when it was too late for their minds to feel its exerting influence, and only in time to regret that they had not seen it before. As many a student, when about to bid farewell to the university, has expressed his astonishment that four years of his life had flown so rapidly away, and also the wish that he could roll back the wheels of time, and pass over the course again with a true sense of the great end and aim before him, so, many a young man of business, as he stepped forth from beneath the roof of protection and guardianship to "set up for himself," to take his place on the arena of competition where he would have to cope with the strong and the experienced, has felt for the first time the

responsibility of his position, and has seen the worth of that preparatory training which alone could qualify him to grapple with the difficulties, to break the snares, and escape the perils that beset him. Let him, therefore, early apprehend the truth that apprenticeship is no mere formality, that its design is not merely to teach the theory of a business, or to show him the things to be done, or how to do them, but to endow him with that power which comes from a HABIT of doing them. The "second nature" formed by habit must be one secret of his success. From this come aptness and skill. When you observe an attendant in a store wrapping a piece of goods with neatness and despatch, it seems easily done; yet even that could not be well imitated by an untutored hand without repeated trials. It is not enough to see another do it; there must be the training of practice. It is so in every thing that may be called professional. Whether you look upon the sailor who seems to feel as much at home upon the "high and giddy mast" as does a bird upon the bough, or the musician who sweeps all the chords of his instrument as with a magic touch, and without the appearance of an effort, or the officer of the Bank who counts vast sums of money with electrical rapidity and with the coolest confidence, or the accountant whose books display the mazes of a complicated business with a beautiful regularity that gives his work the aspect of an amusement more than of a task, reflection teaches you that nothing of this could be accomplished without a close attention and a long practice which have educated the mind to quickness, and every muscle and nerve to obedience. But then the acquisition is worth the cost. To be a thorough master of one's business adds immensely to his enjoyment and usefulness in life. At the outset, therefore, of an engagement with an employer, it is well to be resolved on watching against every tempta-

tion to form lax and careless habits, to be a loiterer, to do things out of their proper time, or to yield to those amusements which check the growth of an energetic interest in your chosen employment. Adopt the maxim of Paul, "not slothful in business;" even though to carry it out, may require self-denial and discipline. It will lead to success; for "seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall not stand before mean men; he shall stand before kings and not be ashamed."

II. In subordination to this rule, is another still more particular, the adoption of which has been productive of good effects: this is, *conform yourself to all the regulations of the establishment*. It was a wise saying of the old Persians, that no man is fit to command who has not learned to obey. The discipline of their public schools, as exhibited by Xenophon, was very minute, and conformity to laws apparently trivial was deemed important as testing and developing character. Every commercial establishment, especially if it be large, is like a well-managed ship, under a necessity of being governed by some specific rules; and conformity to them is rightfully expected. Even if the rules relate to *small matters*, their observance is important in this connexion; for the benefit of strictness is twofold, affecting both the mind of the employer and your own. Evidently, it gains his confidence for you, and places his mind more at ease in regard to the course of his affairs when he is absent from home. This feeling is to him of great value, and is produced in his bosom as much by a strict conformity to his wishes in *little* things as in the management of great transactions. Once, a merchant of New York, while travelling in the distant West, was heard to say that he was free from all anxiety about the business that he had left behind him, on account of his entire confidence in

his head-clerk, who, though at that time quite a youth, let nothing within his province escape his attention. Surely, the mental quiet which such a confidence produces, is worth to any man no ordinary price.

Moreover, this habit of strict conformity to an employer's wishes in the smallest matters *reacts* favorably on one's own character; for surely, he is best qualified to take care of his own interests who has learned to look well after those which another man has committed to him. He who has been careful of his employer's property, is thereby fitted to husband property for himself, and he who gains a reputation for strict fidelity will lay up a good store "against the time to come."

But are there no cases to which these remarks do not apply? Undoubtedly, where the rules themselves are founded in wrong, and are the mere instruments of fraud and chicanery; where they contravene the command of God which is the Law of laws, conformity would insure the forfeiture of his blessing and of your own mental peace. If the business itself which is proposed to you be a bane to society, "touch it not, handle it not." If it be good in itself, but be conducted by rules which strike at the root of public virtue and fair dealing, yield not up to the moral chains and slavery which they impose, for the iron thereof will enter into thy own soul. The bondage which hampers only the body while it leaves the spirit free and serene, is more tolerable than that which forces a man to act contrary to his convictions of right, robs him of his self-respect, turns conscience into a foe, jeopard's his salvation, and arrays against him the workings of an overruling Providence. A man may bear with the frown of his fellow, with the loss of a place, but these other evils are still more terrible and may be eternal. The pains of the flesh are, on the whole, short-lived; those of "the inner man" are immortal as the

soul itself. As saith the scripture, "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a *wounded spirit* who can bear?"

We can easily imagine, however, that some may reply, all this is true; it is very proper that such things should be said and written by moral teachers; but we are the victims of a corrupting system from which the way of extrication is not easy or obvious; we did not originate it, but find ourselves encircled within the ample folds of this mighty net-work, "like the fish of the sea made to be snared and taken." If there were but few whose demands are at war with our consciences, we could quickly get relief; but now, the alternative before us is that we do wrong or starve. Change the system, break down prevailing customs, and then we, one by one, can carry out our resolutions.

But is it so? Must you sacrifice integrity for bread? Must you, in fact, cheat or beg? Must you do those things in trade from which the Turk, guided only by his koran, recoils with indignation? And do you yield to the evil from a feeling of necessity, make that your apology, and thus, drug your conscience with opiates lest you writhe under its sting? If it be so, your case is hard, very hard; and, in some respects, more deplorable than that of those whose bodies were the victims of Algerine captivity. But what is to be done? First, we must say in answer to this question, that if the circumstances of your probation are made so severe by the corrupted principles of trade, the thing to be done is, not to wait for the alteration of the system, but to strengthen in your heart the principle of resistance. Rise superior to the system. Such a moral heroism is not quixotic. Many have put it forth in practice, and have triumphed. We have known young men who have refused to change invoices, or make false entries, or say that an article cost

more than it did, or engage in any kind of false dealing, who have seemed to risk everything, but in fact, have at last gained everything. The trial may be severe but the triumph will be the greater. Therefore, "to yourself be true," "have faith in God," for mighty is the truth and will prevail.

Then again, observe, in regard to the great system of trade, if the majority, or a large proportion of the *youth* of this country were imbued with such a morally heroic spirit as would strengthen them to take a just position in favor of honorable dealing, trade would be relieved from the stigma cast upon it, because the system would thus become conformed to the law of rectitude. If the principles of truth and justice were impressed effectually on one generation by the teachings of the family, the public school, the sabbath school, the sanctuary, and by individual examples, our national character would be brightened, the snares of business would be removed, the realm of trade would not be so thickly-set with traps for consciences, and succeeding generations would start forth on their career with greater advantages.

Let not the young clerk or apprentice, therefore, succumb to wrong, saying in a desponding tone, "I have no influence; I must submit and bide my time." Carry out into action your knowledge of the RIGHT, and you may have more power than you suppose. The Almighty Ruler of the universe will prove himself the patron of virtue, and will be your helper. Take his word for your guide. Let the principles laid down in the book of Proverbs form your rules. Then, if constrained to differ from your seniors, let it be seen by your prompt attention to every duty, and by the courteousness of your manners, and by your generous efforts to please them, that you are governed by no mere whim, by no element of fanaticism, but by the dictates of reason, of conscience,

and of Christianity. Surely, in this way, you will not only win respect, but will find all the ministries of Heaven, and all the workings of Providence, to be on your side. As the voice of a child has been the occasion of a reform in a family when all higher teachings had been in vain, so a young man who maintains his integrity amidst corrupting scenes of business; may put forth an influence more far-reaching than his voice, penetrating as light, and purifying as a hidden fire.

III. A third observation which suggests itself in this connexion relates to the *duty of self-improvement*. Be firmly resolved to cultivate your intellectual and moral nature. In carrying out such a resolution three things demand special care. (1) The first is a good economy of those hours which may be at your own disposal. probably there is many a young man to whom the thought will occur when this subject is mentioned, that he has so little time at his command, any purposes which he may form respecting it would not amount to much. Yet certain it is that he who knows not the value of a little time so as to make it tell on some result, would squander much if he had it in his power to do so. TIME IS MONEY, says Franklin; and surely, as he who throws away cents will waste dollars, so, he who is careless of minutes will waste hours. "Young gentlemen," once said Prof. Anthon to a class of freshmen, "I doubt not you will all make good scholars, if uo one of you will imagine that *ten minutes* is too small a fragment of time to use profitably in study." A great deal may sometimes be done in ten minutes. Attention to a remark like that has made the fortune of many a student. For want of sober calculation on this point many useful things which might be done are never attempted. To illustrate this, observe the following conversation which, in substance, took

place between a young clerk and his old teacher in the Sunday school.

Teacher.—Some time ago you mentioned to me that you had no doubt that the acquisition of the French and Spanish languages would be of great service to you in the course of your business. Have you yet undertaken to learn either of them?

Clerk.—No sir; I have been discouraged by the want of time.

T.—Why, have you not a single hour out of the twenty-four at your command for any study?

C.—Yes, I could get that, but it would be a slow work to acquire a language in that way.

T.—Suppose that you had nothing to do for the next two months—would you make a beginning?

C.—Immediately.

T.—Probably, in your active business life, there never will come a year when you will have more than two months' vacation. And if you had, it would not be for the health of your body or mind to devote more than five unbroken hours every day to close study. If, however, you should do that, you might make great proficiency in the acquisition of a language within the period we have mentioned.

C.—True; I have no doubt of it.

T.—Shall I tell you how to gain that time this year?

C.—I should be glad to know.

T.—Well—begin and persevere in using your one hour a day. Five hours' study per day for two months (leaving out Sundays) would make about 265 hours. But one hour's study per day for a year (leaving out Sundays) would be 313 hours, so that you have at command more than two months of study the present year. And one hour a day, for a year well employed, would enable you to accomplish more in the study of a modern

language for purposes of business than the whole of that time given to you in a mass.

We believe this view of the case to be just. And how obvious is it that this remark applies not only to the study of a language, but to the study of political economy, or of history, or of the Bible, or of any other subject: and how applicable are the words of the poet, who says,

“ The shortest space which we so lightly prize
When it is coming, and before our eyes—
Let it but slide into the eternal main,
No realms, no worlds can purchase it again.”

(2.) Connected with the right use of time is the right use of MONEY. “ He who is faithful in the least is faithful also in that which is much ;” and he who has learned how to spend well his pocket-money while young, is preparing to appropriate large sums prudently in maturer years. The habit of spending immense sums uselessly in manhood comes of spending small sums worse than uselessly in early life.

It was a good suggestion which was once made by a clergyman to a young married couple when they were about to commence housekeeping, to procure a neat book-case, and to fill it only as they might have opportunity to procure such select works as they need. It stood a long time in its place before it was well stored, but it was an object of interest to both of them to devote what money they could spare in order to supply its empty shelves, and when at last they saw it filled with volumes, most of which they had read together, they would not have parted with them for twice their cost. How much more satisfactory were such mementoes of money spent, than an account-book filled with the memoranda of the same amount dissipated in trifling amusements, like precious seed scattered on arid sands to perish fruitlessly. The suggestion here referred to is as applicable to a

young man who has a room to himself, as to those who are heads of families.

(3.) Connected with the right employment of time and money as means of self-improvement, is the faithful use of THE SABBATH. In the conversation which we have cited, between the old teacher and the young clerk respecting the worth of an hour per day throughout the year, for purposes of study, the sabbaths were properly left out of the calculation because these are appropriated by the Author of our being to the care of our spiritual interests. Fifty-two sabbaths a year is the birthright of every man of which he may not lawfully be deprived, and which no one may sell for a mess of pottage. Whatever might be the price in such a traffic, it would, at last, seem mean enough compared with the value sacrificed. If your sabbath be habitually mispent, every good principle of your character will be weakened. When I think of a man posting books, all enwrapped in business on this sacred day, whose winged hours stealing softly by, seem to invite his thoughts to the infinite and the eternal, I imagine that I hear the angel of destiny proclaim, "He is joined to his idols, let him alone." With equal power does this solemn sentence arouse my fears when I observe a young man yielding to the temptation which entices him to take the sabbath for rides, and sports, and sensual recreations; as if the Divine provisions for his moral good were superfluous, as if indeed he had no soul to save. In this way his spiritual energies are destroyed. Yet, true it is, that every sabbath renews, in some form, the temptations described in the early part of our Savior's history. When the sabbath-bell calls man to "worship the Lord our God, and him only to serve," then the evil one holds forth the baits of sensual pleasure, saying, "these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But to accept these terms is to make a wretched

bargain. These rosy blooming pleasures soon shed their fragrance. By these "man can not live." A good plan of spending the sabbath is of inestimable worth, and this, in every case where it is possible, embraces the engaging a seat in some particular church—a seat which one can call his own—occupying it regularly, and also some hours set apart for religious reading. He who is faithful in this, will have reason to adopt a sentiment of Mr. Wilherforce, recorded in his journal: "I thank God for the institution of the sabbath, and may I so use it as to find that by its means my errors are corrected, my desires after good quickened, and my whole soul animated in my Christian course."

IV. It may not be amiss to add a few words in regard to the *choice of friends*. You will have need of a friend, one or more, on whom you can rely for sympathy and counsel. "But a faithful friend, who can find?" The question implies a difficulty, not an impossibility. An oriental writer has said, "Be in peace with many, nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand." Trust not the over-credulous—for his judgment is not good: nor, on the other hand, trust the over-suspicious; for when a man distrusts all others he is unsound at heart. Put not yourself in the power of a covetous person, especially if he be an old man; for there is no kindness in his bosom. And if he be professedly religious, it is very likely that his theory of religion makes covetousness a virtue under the name of frugality. Beware of him, for he is conscientiously cruel. Beware also of slighting religion itself on his account, for it would be foolish to wrong your own soul because you can prove your neighbor a hypocrite. In every engagement with such a one, however, be exact to the letter, and be not satisfied to leave any point with his saying, "I'll do what

is right about it." The supreme love of money is a hellish as well as an earthly passion ; it denies the reality of a generous spirit, it mocks at mercy, it confounds all distinction between right and wrong, between justice and oppression. If you would gain true friends yourself, you must aim to be worthy of them, for the wise man well said, " He that hath friends must show himself friendly.

Friendly reader ! I would close these remarks by wishing you success in the business of your life. But why should I breathe such a wish ? Merely for the enjoyment which success may confer during the brief period of this your fitful, feverish existence ? No. That would be too mean an object to fill the heart of a Christian man, too low to awaken a desire so strong as that with which this wish is uttered. It is that, acting in accordance with the principles here suggested, you may nobly fulfil your mission to the world, " serve well your generation," your country, and your race—that in all things pleasing Christ, who " though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might become rich," your success on earth may enhance your treasure in heaven. Be sure, first of all, that you dedicate your heart, your faculties, and your property, to his service. Then, when He who hath said, " Occupy till I come," shall summon you to the reckoning, you will not dread the meeting, but will hail it with a welcome, and hear that approving sentence, which enfolds within itself all eternal blessings, " Well done, faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee RULER OVER MANY THINGS : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

